DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 392 541 PS 024 035

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TITLE	Beating the Devil Out of Them: Corporal Punishment in American Families.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-02-931730-4
PUB DATE	94
NOTE	297p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Lexington Books/Jossey-Bass, Inc., Publishers, 350 Sansome Street, San Francisco, CA 94104 ($24.95).
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Causal Models; Child Abuse; *Corporal Punishment; Cultural Influences; Depression (Psychology); Discipline; Family Environment; Family Life; Mental Disorders; *Parent Child Relationship; Racial Factors; Sexuality; *Social Attitudes; Socioeconomic Influences; *Violence
IDENTIFIERS	*Disciplinary Styles; Parenting Styles

ABSTRACT

The question of whether corporal punishment is an effective method of discipline has been hotly debated by parents, teachers, and child-rearing experts. Based on studies of over 9,000 families, this book describes the extent to which parents in the United States use corporal punishment (such as spanking and slapping) and its effects on their children. Distinguishing corporal punishment from child abuse as physical punishment not intended to cause injury, the book contends that this believed to be "minor" form of physical violence is the precursor to much of the violence exhibited in today's world, and that children who are spanked learn quickly that love and violence can go hand in hand and that hitting is morally right. The book explores two decades of research--including cultural, gender, and socioeconomic factors--indicating that children who are spanked regularly are from two to six times more likely to be physically aggressive, to become juvenile delinquents, and later as adults, to use physical violence against their spouses, exhibit sadomasochistic tendencies, and to suffer from depression. The chapters of the book are: (1) "[Spanking] The Conspiracy of Silence"; (2) "Everyone Does It, But Less Now"; (3) "Hitting Adolescents"; (4) "Who Spanks the Most?"; (5) "Depression and Suicide"; (6) "Physical Abuse"; (7) "Violence and Crime"; (8) "The Fusion of Sex and Violence"; (9) "Alienation and Reduced Income"; (10) "Ten Myths that Perpetuate Corporal Punishment"; (11) "Social Evolution and Corporal Punishment. Four appendices include a theoretical model of causes and effects of corporal punishment, and books on child abuse searched for discussions of corporal punishment. Contains 200 references. (HTH)

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